

[p.27b]

249 pulp is chopped. Three days later the chopped material is removed and the surface of the cavity is scratched with a rake-like implement. On the fourth day, collection of the juice begins twice daily. Each time juice is collected, the surface of the cavity is scratched with the rake-like implement. The juice is dipped out with a small pottery vessel and poured into a larger container. If the juice is to be shipped to Uruapan it is put in a 25-liter can. A good plant produces slightly more than 2 liters a day.

252 The bud of the wild agave is cooked in a round hole, 1 meter in diameter and 1 meter deep. The hole is filled with small stones to within 10 or 15 cm. of the top, and a large fire is built on top of the stones. When the fire dies down, the agave buds are thrown on it; covered with leaves of agaves and trees; and then sealed with earth. On the third day the oven is opened. The thick fleshy end of leaves of the smaller wild agave are also roasted. The season is from November to May.

Approximately 20 men in Cherán roast agave in season. They must eat sugar when the agave is cooking so that it will emerge sweet. [834] They must also abstain from sexual intercourse during the 3 days the agave is in the oven.¹⁰

245 Pears.—The most important fruit in Cherán [439] is the pear. It is carried by traders as far as Guerrero. Three types are recognized: *lecke* (*uérgamóte*), *perdo* (*carápitl*), and *t'añani* (Spanish name unknown). The only significant difference recognized is that the three types mature at different times, although some say only the *uérgamóte* transports well.

245 Pear trees are always grafted on a rootstock of wild crab apple, *tejocóte*. (This is a sloe-like fruit which bears a marked resemblance in flavor and appearance to the true crab apple.) 242 The *tejocóte* trunk is cut with a saw and then split. A pear graft is inserted at each end of the split, sealed in with wax, and wrapped in clean cloth. It is believed the grafts will grow only in January, February, and March, but a school teacher with experimental tendencies claims to have grown them at all seasons.

[44] ¹⁰ Agave is of varying importance in other towns. In Angahuan the techniques are similar. The plant is known here as *cohuco*; the leaves are called *alima*, the stalk or bud, *alima*. *Matlatal* Chilón makes *moval*. The leaves are sealed in earth ovens, surrounded with sticks in concentric tracks, fermented several days, then distilled. The Tarascan terminology relating to the agave and its processing survives in part.

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757 bathed the infected parts with yerba de cáncer. The entire herb was boiled and then hydrogen peroxide was added to the brew. Two treatments daily for 2 months finally cured the patient.

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846 Husband and wife do not resume sexual relations until at least 35 days after the birth; in most cases the period is 40 days. Husbands are sometimes said to behave badly in connection with the first pregnancy; they have "whims" and "weariness," probably a polite way of saying that they resent the loss of sexual privileges and the lessened attentions of their wives. Some go with other women.

844
262 Shortly after the delivery the mother is given her first food. This may be chocolate, milk, and a bit of bread. Some midwives give the mother *refajo* or coffee but others prefer white atole "because it strengthens the blood." A chicken may be killed the same day and put on to cook to make broth to be served to the mother the following day. Oatmeal is also a favorite food for the mother in the early days. Broth from beef is prohibited but broth from mutton is permitted during the first week. The second week, additional foods may be taken, but nothing "cold." Tortillas may be eaten after the second day. In general, pork, chile, fish, and beans are forbidden for from 3 weeks to 40 days. Fruit and vegetable greens must be eaten sparingly in the latter part of the period, not at all in the early part. There is no restriction on salt. Beef is apparently forbidden only in the first week; cheese is mentioned as a permitted food by some. In some cases the mother is fed the atole known as *kigwaah kamáta* for several days after birth. In view of the general agreement that chile is forbidden, probably this ingredient is left out when the atole is made for mothers. According to some, the midwife stays on the same diet as the mother until the time of the mother's first bath.

844 Fathers have virtually no restrictions. The only one discovered is that he should not kill poisonous snakes. If he does, the newborn infant may have bloody discharges from nose and mouth. The cure is to catch a rat, remove the intestines, add to them some *rosas de castilla* and a few grains of *tequisquite* and place on the child's stomach.

827 linear body build which was repeated in the
143 children, "who looked as though a wind would
blow them away," yet otherwise seemed healthy.

As an exception, there was cited the case of two
girls with red hair and blue eyes in one family.
The children were not seen and might have been
albinos, but the large number of persons who
have visited the United States suggests other
explanations. Another case was cited in which

[142] the parents had black hair and the fairly dark
skin common among Tarascan. Three sons
all had dark-red or auburn hair, and the skin,
although equally dark, showed also darker spots
resembling freckles. In later years the freckles
spread until the skin became a solid color,
darker than that of either parent.

732 Occasional examples occur of children appar-
ently deficient in mentality. Some continue to
show childish reactions and behaviors, laugh
a great deal without occasion, do not care for
their clothing, eat badly, and do not seem to
understand well even when approaching adult
years. Nevertheless, no adults were encoun-
tered who seemed to exhibit insanity or feeble-
mindedness.

854 Few special attentions to infants are recorded.
There is no use of ashes or leaving of corn ears
or fire pokers with infants when they are left
alone, but a broom of straw may be left at the
head of the child's bed for protection against
evil if the mother wishes to leave it for a few
minutes. Children are nursed freely whenever

853 they desire the breast. Although some evi-
dence of shyness was evident, for example, some
mothers draped their reboso over the breast,
nursing takes place in a variety of public cir-
cumstances, on the streets or on the roads, and
even while riding on a burro. Through the
first year or so the child sleeps with the nipple
of the mother's breast in its mouth at night.
Perhaps as a result of this there is a virtually
complete absence of thumb sucking at all ages.

854 Infants are ordinarily carried by their
mothers, almost invariably wrapped in the
reboso. Even if the child is carried in the arm,
the reboso is slung around the child and over
the shoulders to take part of the weight.
Ordinarily a small child is slung more or less
horizontally in the reboso on the mother's back.
One end of the reboso goes under the left arm,
the other over the right shoulder, the two ends

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841 track of the periods are used but some account is kept of the phase of the moon and an approximate idea formed. The normal menstruation is regarded as lasting 3 or 4 days. Slight or excessive flows during the period are believed to be bad. No special garments are worn, but the ordinary underwear is carefully washed after the flow ends.

• [634] Women should not have relations with men during the menstrual period, and most women do not resume relations with their husbands until they have bathed, although some do so as soon as menstruation ends. Violation of this rule is believed to be bad for the men and to cause them to contract a disease with ulcers.

[753] Women may prepare food for themselves and others, but they must not eat certain foods. 841 These include "cold" things, such as avocados or prickly pears. Beans, if eaten, must be consumed with quantities of onions. Rice, pork, and preserved chiles (because the liquid is very "cool") are also believed to be bad. Dried chiles may be eaten. *Aguardiente* is also avoided, although a little in coffee or orange-leaf tea is believed to be helpful. The majority, if possible, drink chocolate in the mornings even though they may not normally do so or may even dislike it. In connection with the concept of "coldness" it should be noted that this refers to the supposed effects on the person, not to the quality of the thing itself. Cold water, for example, may be consumed freely. Aside from sexual restrictions, men have no special rules to observe when their wives menstruate.

MARRIAGE AND SEX RELATIONSHIPS

381 Marriage is the normal state of the Cherán adult and unmarried persons are relatively rare, except among the aged. Although sexual inverts were reported, in every case they had married. One woman is known to be an invert and is called *tore-ecce*. As a girl she attempted to seduce other girls, and a woman told Rendón that in her childhood the individual in question once tried to drag her into a vacant lot, stopping her mouth with a *rebazo*, but she tore loose and screamed and was rescued by her father. Various charges were also made against the woman in court, but nothing was ever done.

576 over the part of the rim the lips have touched,
264 before passing the pitcher on.

515 Adults bathe fairly regularly on their own initiative. Young men and women usually bathe at least once a week; older men may not bathe more than once a month. Most people go to a special bathing place, Uékuaro, a waterfall in one of the barrancas beyond Paricutin, but women sometimes bathe at home. The bathing place at Uékuaro is reserved for men on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; for women the rest of the week. Most people soap themselves freely and shampoo the hair thoroughly. Young men seemed a bit shy when bathing, often covering the genitals with the hand when turning toward others, but older men and boys seemed to have no self-consciousness.

• [534] Head lice afflict many if not all Cherán residents, especially children. Delousing is a common occupation when women are visiting or resting with the children about. Men also delouse the children, but a man was never seen being deloused. Sunny days when people sit about the house yards are a favorite time, but delousing was never seen on the streets.

517 Most adults possess a fairly common set of
523 likes and dislikes, some of which have been developed during childhood, others acquired as adults. Perhaps the strongest likes are for the fiestas, mapordomías, and weddings. These are the core of the costumbres and Cherán people are as passionately attached to the body of practices they call customs as are most Mexican Indian groups. Most people are also fond of flowers, and almost every house has a little flower garden. Shasta daisies, dahlias, iris, larkspurs, marigolds, geraniums, calla lilies, roses, and gladiolus are the most popular plants. Fancy pottery, especially the green glazed ware of Patambán and La Cañada, the brown or black glazed ware of Santa Fe and Quiroga, and the colored glazed wares of Guanajuato and, to a lesser extent, Guadalajara, are all prized and accumulated for special occasions. Lacquered plates and gourds are also liked. Many have a real passion for collecting miniatures of the material artifacts of Tarascan life. Miniatures are found on sale in abundance at every fiesta and might be mistaken for playthings, but they are all bought by adults who hang them up in the kitchen and the "troje." Both sexes like